RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 19*th March,* 2008 / 29 *Phalguna,* 1929 (*Saka*)

The House met at eleven of the clock,

MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Thrust to Marine Exports from Tamil Nadu by MPEDA

*281. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Marine Product Export Development Authority (MPEDA) is giving sufficient thrust to marine exports from Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, what is the quantum of export of marine products from Tamil Nadu in 2006-07 and the current year upto 31st December, 2007;

(c) whether it is a fact that the MPEDA has not surveyed the full potential of marine fisheries of Tuticorin and other marine areas; and

(d) what steps are proposed to formulate a special scheme to encourage local people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The item-wise export details from Tamil Nadu in 2006-07 and 2007-08 up to 31st December, 2007 are given in the Statement I. (*see* below)

(c) MPEDA has conducted a survey in all the States including Tamil Nadu for exploiting the full potential of marine fisheries in these areas. Based on this, an action plan has been drawn up both for export production as well as promotion. There are three offices of MPEDA in Tamil Nadu, one each in Chennai and Tuticorin and the third at Thanjavur mandated to look after exports.

(d) MPEDA closely works with the primary producers and exporters to enhance export production, improvement of quality, sustainable aspects of fisheries, etc. in the coastal areas. MPEDA's field offices work with various establishments in the State to encourage the local people. The newly formed Societies namely, National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture (NaCSA) and Network for Fish Quality Mangement & Sustainable Fishing (NETFISH) constituted under the aegis of MPEDA work with primary producers like farmers and fishermen in increasing their capacity to meet the growing challenges in export production, quality aspects, supply chain improvement, sustainability, etc.

Statement-I

Item-wise export details from Tamil Nadu in 2006-07 and 2007-08 upto 31st December, 2007

Item Name	2006-07 (April-March)			April-December 2007		
	Quantity Tons	Value Rs. Crore	US $ (Million)	Quantity Tons	Value Rs. Crore	US $ (Million)
Frozen Shrimp	41181	1609.44	355.27	31710	1068.03	263.95
Frozen Fish	3407	26.71	5.95	3809	26.23	6.51
Fr. Cuttle Fish	7835	139.69	30.72	6763	125.17	31.08
Fr. Squid	3782	65.32	14.35	2926	46.14	11.44
Dried Items	8488	54.75	12.14	5754	43.31	10.70
Live Items	1748	43.08	9.58	1152	29.01	7.15
Chilled Items	2410	32.97	7.91	953	15.12	3.76
Others	4031	96.09	21.30	2942	74.30	18.42
TOTAL :	72883	2068.05	457.22	56008	1427.31	353.00

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, I am happy that the Minister has tried to give some answer. But there is a general impression that the Marine Product Export Development Authority (MPEDA) is not doing much. Tamil Nadu has a very vast coastline, yet there has not been significant growth in the export of marine products. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what are the reasons for the poor performance of the MPEDA in ensuring that our exports are value-added, and not just frozen shrimp or fish. Why is the MPEDA not concentrating on improving exports?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, the impression that the MPEDA is not doing enough for promoting export is not right. In the last three years there has been significant turn around in our export performance. It used to stagnate throughout the nineties at about 1.2 to 1.3 billion dollars. But in 2005-06, it was 1.6 billion dollars. Last year, it reached 1.8 billion dollars. This year we hope to close with an export of about 2 billion dollars. so, in the last three years, there has been a significant turn around in the export performance. I agree that the export performance could be better. But there are severe problems in the fact that almost 54 per cent of our exports is constituted by shrimp alone. We need to diversify away from this dependence on shrimp. That is precisely the reason why the Tenth Plan allocation for the MPEDA was Rs. 200 crore, while the Eleventh Plan allocation is Rs. 450 crores. It is very significant step up. You will see results during the Eleventh Plan period. We have issued a vision document for the first time for marine product exports and we hope to reach an export target of 4 billion dollars by the year 2012.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, I would like to put my supplementary in relation to my last question. I understand that the MPEDA is favouring foreign Tuna companies of the USA and Europe. I would like the Minister to tell us as to why the MPEDA is supporting the orders of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, which is a body consisting of all European countries and the American countries. Only about seven Indian Ocean countries are there. The European and American countries have almost 5,000 tuna boats, while India has only a small number of boats about twenty. The MPEDA is supporting the IOTC and wants Indians to surrender all the rights.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put your question.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, I must tell the hon. Minister also that the fishermen federations have represented to the Government. There is an adverse impact because of the free-trade agreement. We have free-trade agreement with the European Union; we have free-trade agreement with USA; we have free-trade agreement with ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put your question.

SHRI D. RAJA: This is for the question, Sir. So, there is an adverse impact due to free-trade agreement. There is also the problem of coastal zones. Fishermen have asked to scrap the recommendations made by ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Raja, please put your question.

SHRI D. RAJA: I want the hon. Minister to respond to all these issues because ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Only one supplementary question please.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, this is related to my last question. How is the Government going to promote and protect the interests of the local fishing community? Unless the Government protects their interest, how can our economy thrive on?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, the hon. Member is suffering from series of misapprehensions, which are absolutely not true. As far as tuna is concerned, today, in our export basket of about 1.8 billion dollars, tuna's export is only about 20 million dollars. The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is an inter-Government body of 28 Indian Ocean countries. This is headquartered at Seychelles. India is a member of this body. We need to increase the contribution of tuna to our exports. We need to diversify away from shrimp. Our plan is to reach a tuna export of about 500 million dollars by the year 2012. Tuna is a highly complicated, highly technology intensive type of fisheries unlike shrimp which is, comparatively, easier. We need to get technology from abroad. That is what we are trying to do. We are converting the existing fishing into long liners for tuna. There is, absolutely, no question of depending on somebody else for tuna. I also want to inform the hon. Member that tuna is a highly migratory species of fish. If we do not catch our tuna in our waters, this tuna migrates and it gets caught in by countries, like Thailand and it gets attributed to countries of South East Asia. We need to move into tuna more aggressively than we have been.

Sir, as far as Free Trade Agreements are concerned, I would like to inform the hon. Member that there is no Free Trade Agreement with America. As far as the Free Trade Agreement with the European Union is concerned, negotiations have started. Two rounds of negotiations have taken place. And the hon. Minister for Commerce has assured the Chief Ministers of Kerala and other coastal States that the interests of the fishing community will be taken into account fully when negotiating the final agreement. There is no question of opening our markets to foreign fish products and sacrificing the interests of our own fishermen. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Raja. You have had your say. Shri Malaisamy.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. The Minister has said in his reply that he has made a thorough survey about the potentiality. I am inclined to know from the hon. Minister and hope that he will answer this with his thoroughness he used to. I would like to know whether any potentiality study has been done in and around the Katchateevu area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put the question.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: I would like to know whether enough potentiality is available in and around Katchateevu or not. If available, can it be created by some device through the migration of various kinds of fish, etc. and brought them to our Indian territory?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, the new thrust area for fisheries for tuna, particularly, is going to be the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which has about 25-30 per cent of India's tuna potential. As far as Inland aquaculture is concerned, the focus States are going to be Gujarat and Maharashtra which have significant underdeveloped brackish water aquaculture potential. As far as Katchateevu is concerned, Sir, I am not in a position to answer this question. But, in view of the importance of Katchateevu to the hon. Member, I will get back to him very soon on this.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. Sir, the hon. Minister is a very efficient Minister and he has given good answer. But, in the answer itself there is a question. He said that our tuna export is very small when compared with the total potential we are having. Sir, we have, hardly, 20 vessels. When there is so much of scope and potential, I am surprised to see that you are not doing anything. Let me put the question. Sir, the reasons is that...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put the question.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: They are subsevient to the IODTC about which my friend, Shri D. Raja mentioned. I would like to know, especially, from the hon. Minister what the Government is doing to ensure that our full potential of tuna is caught and exported. I would also like to know, specifically, what the MPEDA, which is meant for promoting this, is doing in this area.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, for the first time, a perspective plan for tuna fishing has been prepared. This was released in Port Blair just two months ago. I will be glad to share the copy of this perspective plan for tuna with the hon. Member. I mentioned it earlier and I would like to repeat that our plan is to reach an export level of about $ 500 million in the next five years. It is possible. The main focus of tuna fishing is going to be Andamans, but, there is also substantial potential for tuna in Visakhapatnam and Tuticorin as well. Tuna is going to be the thrust area for the MPEDA. I would like to reiterate that it is highly technology-intensive. It is going to call for new investments in fishing harbours, in long liners, etc. And, we are in the process of bringing about these changes. I would like to assure the hon. Member that in this process, the maximum priority is going to be given to conversion of existing fishing vessels into tuna liners. There is no question of getting tuna liners from abroad.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, again and again, the hon. Minister, in his reply, is saying that catching tuna fish is a very technology-intensive area. As I understand, we have got about 1,50,000 nautical miles area in the EEZ and we are not commercially exploiting that area totally. Tuna has a good potential in the world market, especially in Japan. But, unfortunately, the foreign trawlers are using a special type of light below their trawlers which attracts tuna fish towards them. As the hon. Minister said right now, tuna is a migratory fish and, naturally, it is attracted by the foreign trawlers. Why is the Indian Government or the MPEDA not buying that type of technology and that type of trawlers to catch tuna in our areas, or, to attract tuna from the other areas to our areas?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, as I have explained, MPEDA has got in to tuna for the first time only in the last four or five months. We had prepared a detailed perspective plan

which I will be able to share with the hon. Members very soon and even today. And, it is our intention to do all that we can to enable domestic industry to benefit from diversification in to tuna. It requires long liners, it requires processing on-board and the hon. Member is right when he says that there is a substantial potential for export of tuna, particularly, to Japan and South-East Asia, which we have not exploited. I believe, Sir, that this is one very important area as far as marine products are concerned, the movement away from our dependence on shrimp to tuna.

Export of marine products

*282. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the total export of marine products in 2006-07 and 2007-08 upto 31.01.2008;

(b) whether it is a fact that export of value added marine products has not grown in the year 2006-07;

(c) what role Marine Product Export Development Authority (MPEDA) has played in bringing better marketing techniques and advice to this export in the current year;

(d) whether there is a need to frequently upgrade the level of skills and knowledge and capability of MPEDA;

(e) the steps proposed to enhance skills and knowledge at MPEDA; and

(f) the measures proposed to review the role of MPEDA?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The total exports of marine products during 2006-07 and 2007-08 up to January, 2008 are given below:—

Particulars	2006-2007	2007-2008 (April, 2007 to January, 2008)
Quantity in Tonnes	612641	435873
Value in Rs. Crore	8363.53	6266.69
US $ in Million	1852.93	1556.09

(b) Exports of value added items have grown steadily over the last five years as per the details below:—

Year	Quantity (Tonne)	Value (Rs. Crore)	US $ (Million)
2002-03	10787	203.52	42.15
2003-04	13423	243.28	53.08
2004-05	17880	331.44	73.78
2005-06	21778	387.82	87.98
2006-07	21406	417.97	92.70